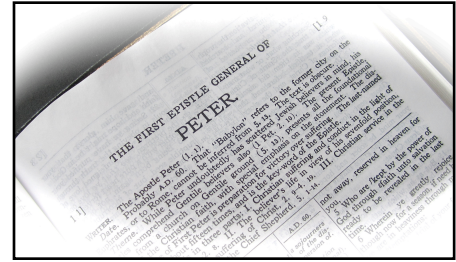


# Books of The Bible A Survey of First Peter

## Author

Among those who loom large in the pages of Holy Writ, Peter is one of the largest. With the exception of our Lord, we read of Peter more than any other man the gospels. His words are recorded more often than any other disciple and there are more recorded words of the Lord speaking to him than any other disciple, either in praise or reprimand.



- a) He reproves the Lord (Matt. 16:21-22)
- b) Spoke impulsively (Matt. 17:1-4)
- c) He was one of the first disciples the Lord called (Mk. 1:16-18; Matt. 4:18-19; Lk. 5:1-9)
- d) It was Peter who confessed Jesus as the Christ (Mk. 8:29; Matt. 16:16; Lk. 9:20)
- e) He was one of the three disciples who were with the Lord at the raising of Jairus daughter (Mk. 5:37), at the Lord's transfiguration (Matt. 17:1), and in the garden (Mk. 14:33)

From time to time there is talk of Peter's failures as when he began to sink in the waters, or when he denied the Lord. However, before we can point a finger at him, we must ask: "Would I have walked on the water?"; or when surrounded by soldiers, etc., "would I have confessed the Lord?" He was the only man, apart from the Lord, to walk on water (Matt. 14:28-33). Furthermore, in his denial, who among us have always stood firm in the face of opposition and never been silent in our confession of the Lord? There is another truth we seldom hear about, it is how did Peter feel after his failures? Concerning his denial, he wept bitterly (Matt. 26:75; Lk. 22:62). The word translated "wept" means to wail bitterly, being used of Rachel weeping for her children (Matt. 2:18) and those who wept when Dorcas died (Acts 9:39). The word translated "bitterly" is only used in these two references and indicates a violent grief.

I have no doubt that Peter agonized in asking himself two questions:

- a) "How could I have done that?", not only then but in time to come.
- b) "How could he forgive himself?", for it was easier to accept God's forgiveness than to forgive himself.

Thank God in the darkness of the hour the Lord "threw a lifeline" and in that lifeline there was light and the possibility that all was not lost. Peter, knowing the love of the Lord, was restored. There must be very few saints who have always walked such a straight path that they never wondered had they become a castaway (1 Cor. 9:27). It is very easy to point fingers at others, yet with the hypocritical leaven of the Pharisees, at the same time deny the corruption within ourselves.

- 1) He was a man of strong character, and having a teachable spirit, learnt from his failures. A comparison of that which he experienced and wrote is clearly seen when there is the comparison between the gospels and his epistle.

1 Peter	The New Testament	1 Peter	The New Testament
Ch. 1:8	Jn. 20:29	Ch. 4:19	Lk. 23:46
Ch. 1:17	Acts 10:15, 34	Ch. 5:2	Jn. 21:15-17
Ch. 2:8	Matt. 16:18	Ch. 5:4	Matt. 19:28
Ch. 2:8	Matt. 16:23	Ch. 5:5	Jn. 13:1-6
Ch. 2:13-16	Matt. 17:24-27	Ch. 5:8	Lk. 22:31
Ch. 2:25	Jn. 10:11	Ch. 5:8	Matt. 5:25

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1 Peter	The New Testament	1 Peter	The New Testament
Ch. 3:20	Matt. 24:37	Ch. 5:12	Lk. 22:32
Ch. 4:8	Matt. 18:22		

- 2) He had a burden that the saints would have a permanent foundation of the truths which came from God. (2 Pet. 1:14-15)
- 3) Peter is the messenger of hope, being one of the individuals God uses to teach the truth: “He restoreth my soul” (Psa. 23:3). Thank God He is the God of restoration and second chance, even toward the disobedient Jonah (Jon. 1:2-3). Being the messenger of hope it becomes a theme in his epistle. Thank God there is always hope of recovery. David sinned and had a man murdered (2 Sam. 11:1-4; 16-17), Noah walked with God yet got drunk (Gen. 6:9; 9:21), and Peter denied the Lord (Matt. 26:34). How gracious God is, for in contrast to us when another falls we often in pseudo spirituality cast them aside, and they are finished. Thankfully, not as far as God is concerned. He used David to write some of the Psalms so loved (Psa. 3:1; 9:1; 14:1); Noah is mentioned in the annal of faith (Heb. 11:7); and Peter was given the keys of the kingdom (Matt. 16:19). I wonder how many would go to hear a preacher who committed adultery, had a man murdered, a man who cursed and denied the Lord, or a man who got drunk?
  - a) In this regard, we observe that Peter was constantly being restored and called by the Lord.
- 4) His full name was Simon Peter, also called “Cephas” (1 Cor. 15:5-6), with Simon being the same as the Old Testament name “Simeon” (Gen. 49:5; Lk. 2:25). He is one of several “Simon’s” in the New Testament: Simon called Zelotes (Lk. 6:15); Simon the Canaanite (Matt. 10:4); Simon the leper (Matt. 26:6); Simon the brother of our Lord (Mk. 6:3); Simon the Pharisee (Lk. 7:40); Simon who carried the Lord’s cross, the Cyrenian (Matt. 27:32; Mk. 15:21); Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:9); and Simon the tanner (Acts 9:43).
- 5) Peter came from Bethsaida (Jn. 1:42, 44), and of his parents only his father Jonas is named (Jn. 1:42). He and his brother Andrew were fishers (Mk. 1:16). Concerning his marital status, he was a married man who seemingly had his mother-in-law living with he and his wife. We know nothing of any children. At some point he began to live in Capernaum (Lk. 4:31, 38).
  - a) After Jesus' ascension, Peter is the leader of the disciples, calling for a replacement for Judas. (Acts 1:15; 20-21).
  - b) He was the representative on the Day of Pentecost. (Acts 2:14-40)
  - c) Through him a lame man was healed in the Temple. (Acts 3:1-26)
  - d) John and he are brought before the Sanhedrin, but he boldly proclaims the message of Christ. (Acts 4:1-31)
  - e) According to the authority given to him, Peter pronounces judgment against Ananias and Sapphira. (Acts 5:1-16)
  - f) After Stephen's martyrdom, Peter and John are sent to Samaria to investigate the news of the Samaritans who have believed in Jesus. They lay hands on the Samaritan believers who then receive the Spirit. (Acts 8:14-17)
  - g) Peter then has a confrontation with Simon the magician who attempts to buy the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8:14-24)
  - h) He traveled to Lydda where he healed the paralyzed Aeneas in the name of Jesus. (Acts 9:32-35)
  - i) He then went to Joppa where he raised Tabitha (Dorcas) from the dead. (Acts 9:36-42)
  - j) He stays in Joppa for a time with Simon the tanner. (Acts 9:43)
  - k) Later Peter has a vision not to call what God had cleansed unclean, and because of the lesson learnt, when invited, he went to Cornelius. (Acts 10:1-48)
  - l) Peter is present for Jerusalem council where he speaks on behalf of Paul and Barnabas. (Acts 15)

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- m) He was arrested by King Agrippa with James, the brother of John; although James is executed, Peter escapes miraculously with the assistance of an angel. (Acts 12:2-3; 6-11)
- n) After his escape from prison, Peter leaves Jerusalem. (Acts 12:1-17)

### His Style

Peter writes much the same way as Paul does in Romans and Titus. It is an argumentative style stating a point and giving the reason. Because of this there is constant use of the word “for”, using it in 54 verses in his first epistle and 20 times in the second. Although not all the “for’s” are argumentative, some focus on a purpose such as:

- a) “Reserved in Heaven FOR you” (ch. 1:4)
- b) “Hope to the end for the grace” (ch. 1:13)
- c) “Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example” (ch. 2:21)

### The Recipients

While 1 Peter is addressed to the strangers scattered (ch. 1:1), that does not mean it was exclusively for the Jews of the “Diaspora”. “Diaspora” is a Greek word used of people of a city state who emigrated to a conquered land to assimilate the territory into the mold of the empire. When the scriptures were translated into Greek, the word was used to refer to the Jews who were scattered by the Babylonians in 587 B.C., and from Judea by the Romans in 70 A. D. References such as ch. 1:14, 18; 2:10 and 4:3 are statements which could scarcely be said of Jews. Having said that, it is my understanding that Peter was writing primarily to Jews for the following reasons:

- a) The word “Diaspora” is used only two other times in the New Testament (Jn. 7:35; James 1:1), and in those cases refers to literal Jews and Jewish Christians.
- b) Peter was an apostle to the Gentiles. (Gal. 2:2; 7, 8)
- c) The multiplicity of Old Testament quotations would lend weight to the recipients being Jewish, for those ancient scriptures would mean little if anything at all to Gentiles. (See notes on “The Old Testament in 1 Peter” later in the paper)

### Key Verse

Ch. 2:21-25; 3:8

### Key Words

- 1) “Suffer” (ch. 2:20; 3:14, 17; 4:15, 16, 19); “Suffering” (ch. 2:19); “Sufferings” (ch. 1:11; 4:13; 5:1) and “suffered” (ch. 2:21, 23; 3:18; 4:1; 5:10)
- 2) “Precious” (ch. 1:7, 19; 2:4, 6, 7)
- 3) “Hope” (ch. 1:3, 13, 21; 3:15). This is very beautiful for it could be said that Paul was the “Apostle of faith”; John was the “Apostle of love”; and Peter was the “Apostle of hope”.
- 4) “Glory” (ch. 1:7, 8, 11, 21, 24; 2:20; 4:13, 14; 5:1, 4, 10, 11); “glorified” (ch. 4:11, 14)
- 5) “Amen” (ch. 4:11; 5:11, 14)
- 6) “Grace” (ch. 1:2, 10, 13; 3:7; 4:10; 5:5, 10, 12)

### The Purpose in Writing

- 1) When Peter wrote this epistle the saints were suffering persecution on at least two fronts. Verbally they were being evil spoken of (ch. 2:12; 3:16), and enduring fiery trials (ch. 1:7; 4:12-13). The fiery trials may have been the same as that which the Hebrews were facing, and from that book it would entail being made a “gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions”; and “they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods” (Heb. 10:33-34).
- 2) Our Lord had told Peter to “strengthen his brethren” (Lk. 22:32); “Feed my lambs” and “feed my sheep” (Jn. 21:15-17); and this is what he does in his epistles. In this writing Peter is seen as a shepherd caring for the flock.

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- 3) It is at the end of his first epistle that Peter gives his reason for writing when he informed the suffering saints: "I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand" (1 Pet. 5:12). There are at least two matters which need consideration when enduring any aspect of suffering, doing so for the glory of God?
  - a) What is meant by "true grace"? (1 Pet. 5:12)
  - b) What does it mean "true grace wherein ye stand"? (1 Pet. 5:12)
  
- 4) True grace. This is the only time when this clause is used in the scriptures. This is all the more intriguing when the word "grace" is used in 163 verses. The emphasis is therefore placed on the word "true", which indicates there is a spurious grace, that which is not true, but in what ways was this spurious grace manifested?
  - a) There was, and is today, a spurious grace which denies the all sufficiency of the sacrifice and sufferings of the Lord in providing salvation. It is a message which combines works with grace and consequently nullifies grace (Rom. 11:6). Grace and works are incompatible when it comes to the reception of salvation.
  - b) A second spurious message of grace was the teaching that body and spirit were not connected and there was no interaction between the body and spirit. Therefore, one could sin in whatever way with the body, but it did not affect the spirit! There was the failure to recognize that every activity has a spiritual dimension (1 Cor. 10:31). This is the teaching of Romans 6:1, 11.
  - c) The true grace of God is that salvation is by grace alone, and effects the individual's life.
  
- 5) Grace can be viewed in at least three ways:
  - a) The benevolent kindness of God in His bestowments to those who are undeserving (2 Cor. 8:9). This is heavily emphasized in the Corinthian epistle (1 Cor. 1:5).
  - b) The sphere of favor in which one is placed as in Rom. 5:2.
  - c) God's infused character being outlived in the life of the individual (1 Cor. 15:10).
  
- 6) It is these last two aspects which are predominate in 1 Peter.
  
- 7) His message then is: "You who were not the people of God and (by the grace of God) have been made the people of God, live your life in fellowship with the grace which God has brought you into". (1 Pet. 2:10-19)
  
- 8) Into which ye stand, they had already entered it and the encouragement is to demonstrate the characteristics which grace makes of a person when they live in that environment. Their behavior is not because of cultured politeness but the grace of God. He began by grace, finishes on grace, and throughout the epistle emphasizes grace. (ch. 1:2, 10, 13; 3:7; 4:10; 5:5, 10, 12)

### The Style of Peter

The man Peter was dominating and energetic, therefore, it is not to be wondered at that his writings are full of imperatives, and absolutes given without apology in straight talk. Review the following statements in which there is no room for debate or questioning:

"Be sober" (ch. 1:13)	"Be ye holy" (ch. 1:15)
"Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear" (ch. 1:17)	"Love one another" (ch. 1:22)
"Desire the sincere milk of the word" (ch. 2:2)	"Submit yourselves" (ch. 2:13)

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“Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king” (ch. 2:17)	“Servants, be in subjection” (ch. 2:18)
“Wives, be in subjection” (ch. 3:1)	“Husbands, dwell with your wives according to knowledge” (ch. 3:7)
“Be not afraid” (ch. 3:14)	“Neither be troubled” (ch. 3:14)
“Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts” (ch. 3:15)	“Be ready” (ch. 3:15)
“Arm yourselves” (ch. 4:1)	“Be ye therefore sober” (ch. 4:7)
“Rejoice” (ch. 4:13)	“Let none of you suffer” (ch. 4:15)
“Let him not be ashamed” (ch. 4:16)	“Let him glorify God” (ch. 4:16)
“Let them . . . commit the keeping of their souls” (ch. 4:19)	“Feed the flock of God” (ch. 5:2)
“Subject yourselves unto the elder” (ch. 5:5)	“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God” (ch. 5:6)
“Casting all your care upon Him” (ch. 5:7)	“Be vigilant” (ch. 5:8)
“Resist steadfast” (ch. 5:9)	

**The Old Testament in 1 Peter**

Peter, as with all the New Testament books, quotes from the Septuagint, and being brought up Jewish he had an extensive knowledge of the Scriptures. Therefore, it is expected he will quote having Old Testament statements shadowing in the background. Some of these are:

<b>1 Peter</b>	<b>Old Testament</b>	<b>1 Peter</b>	<b>Old Testament</b>
Ch. 1:7	Psa. 66:10; Isa. 48:10	Ch. 2:24	Isa. 53:4-7, 11
Ch. 1:10	Hag. 2:7	Ch. 2:25	Isa. 53:6; Ezek. 34:6, 23
Ch. 1:12	Isa. 53:3	Ch. 3:1	Gen. 3:16
Ch. 1:16	Lev. 11:44, 45; 19:2	Ch. 3:6	Gen. 18:12
Ch. 1:19	Ex. 12:5; Isa. 53:7	Ch. 3:10	Psa. 34:12
Ch. 1:24	Psa. 103:15; Isa. 40:6	Ch. 3:11	Psa. 37:27
Ch. 1:25	Isa. 40:8	Ch. 3:13	Prov. 16:7
Ch. 2:3	Psa. 34:8	Ch. 3:14	Jer. 1:8
Ch. 2:5	Isa. 61:6	Ch. 3:19	Isa. 42:7; 61:1

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1 Peter	Old Testament	1 Peter	Old Testament
Ch. 2:6	Isa. 28:16	Ch. 3:20	Gen. Ch. 6-7
Ch. 2:7	Psa. 118:22	Ch. 3:22	Psa. 110:1
Ch. 2:8	Isa. 8:14	Ch. 4:3	Ezek. 44:6; 45:9
Ch. 2:9	Ex. 19:6; Deut. 14:2	Ch. 4:18	Jer. 25:29
Ch. 2:10	Hos. 1:9-10	Ch. 5:3	Ezek. 34:4
Ch. 2:11	Psa. 39:12; 119:19	Ch. 5:5	Isa. 57:15; 66:2
Ch. 2:17	Prov. 24:21	Ch. 5:7	Psa. 37:5; 55:22
Ch. 2:22	Isa. 53:9	Ch. 5:8	Job 1:7; 2:2
Ch. 2:23	Isa. 53:7		

**Divine Persons in 1 Peter**

1) Christ is spoken of as:

- a) "Jesus Christ" (ch. 1:1)
- b) "Lord Jesus Christ" (ch. 1:3)
- c) "Christ" (ch. 1:11)
- d) "Lamb" (ch. 1:19)
- e) "A chief corner stone" (ch. 2:6)
- f) "Head of the corner" (ch. 2:7)
- g) "Stone of stumbling and a Rock of offense" (ch. 2:7-8)
- h) "Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (ch. 2:25)
- i) "The Lord God" (ch. 3:15, Some translations texts read "Christ "as" or "the" Lord" RSV, Darby, RSV)
- j) "The Just" (ch. 3:18)
- k) "Chief Shepherd" (ch. 5:4)

2) God is spoken of as:

- a) "God the Father" (ch. 1:2)
- b) "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (ch. 1:3)
- c) "God" (ch. 1:5)
- d) "The Lord" (ch. 3:12, stated twice in this verse)
- e) "God of all grace" (ch. 5:10)
- f) "True grace of God" (ch. 5:12)

3) The Holy Spirit is spoken of as:

- a) "Sanctification of the Spirit" (ch. 1:2)
- b) "The Spirit of Christ" (ch. 1:11)
- c) "Obeying the truth through the Spirit" (ch. 1:22)
- d) "Quickened by the Spirit" (ch. 3:18)
- e) "Spirit of glory" (ch. 4:14)

4) The Scriptures are spoken of as:

- a) "The Word of God" (ch. 1:23)

### The Salient Message of 1 Peter

It is almost impossible to read 1 Peter without being impressed by the repetition of three words: “suffer” (and its associates), glory, and grace. I would take it for granted that all who read these pages have known, or are knowing, either one or multiple deep trials. It may be emotional through a death, a separation etc., physical, economical, fraternal, or spiritual, but they are never welcome and can be very severe. Peter uses words such as “fiery” (ch. 4:12) (the word means a smelting conflagration and it is with the thought of ch. 1:7 in his mind); “endure grief” (ch. 2:19). While we are not told specifically what the trial was they were enduring, they like us had to learn that the Lord is seen as the “Refiner” (Mal. 3:3), ever so carefully adjusting the severity of the trial to our experiences with him, and measuring our learning (Heb. 5:14; 12:11). Thank God He does not refine with unfeeling callous indifference but with love (Heb. 12:6), and knowing the reality of suffering. No man ever suffered as our Lord, for as Psalm 22 is read, surely the personal pronouns are pronounced. Read carefully the expressions: “My bone, my heart, my bowels, my strength, my tongue, my jaws, my hands, my feet, my garments, my vesture” (Psa. 22:14-18). Isaiah will write: I hid not “My face” from shame and spitting” (Isa. 50:6); “The shame of my face hath covered me” (Psa. 44:15), I gave my back to the smiters” (Isa. 50:6). How deeply He had known reproach. Six references to it are Psalm 69:7, 9, 10, 19, 20. He knew the depths of loneliness when He was as: “I watch, and am as a sparrow alone” (Psa. 102:7); and when “Lover and friend hast Thou put far from me” (Psa. 88:18). The permitting of this disciplining is not by a cold indifferent Refiner, but measured by the heart of infinite love and tenderness. As we endure it we learn the “true grace of God” (ch. 5:12).

The Holy Spirit caused Peter to write for the encouragement of not only those ancient saints but all saints under affliction, reminding them that suffering was the “stepping stone” for His glorification. It is the same for us (ch. 1:6-7; 4:13-14; 5:10). They also know that the sufferings they endure must not be because of personal wrong doing (ch. 2:11), but for their fidelity (ch. 3:14). Furthermore, they can rest in the knowledge that the suffering is not because of some emotional coldness in the attitude of God toward them for: “He careth for you” (1 Pet. 5:7). The God who cares for the oxen (1 Cor. 9:9), and we are more precious than animals, surely cares for us! Titus had a care for the saints (2 Cor. 8:16), surely the care the Lord has for us is greater. Having that grace by “which we were saved” (Eph. 2:8-9), and His promise: “My grace is sufficient for you” (2 Cor. 12:9); for the afflictions of life we can know that: “The Lord will give grace and glory” (Psa. 84:11). Grace for the trial and glory at its end.

### Peculiarities in 1 Peter

Words or expressions only used in 1 Peter. Only Peter will use the expression

- a) Only Peter will use the expression: “blood of Jesus Christ” (ch. 1:2)
- b) Speak of “precious blood” (ch. 1:19); “sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” (ch. 1:2); “fadeth not away” (ch. 1:4; 5:4); “without respect” (ch. 1:17); “sincere milk” (ch. 2:2); “example” (ch. 2:21); “excess” (ch. 4:4); “fiery trial” (ch. 4:12); “busybody” (ch. 4:15); “clothed” (ch. 5:5); “elected together” (ch. 5:13); “Bishop of your souls” (ch. 2:25); “plaiting” (ch. 3:3); “wearing” (ch. 3:3); “putting on” (ch. 3:3); “flock of God” (ch. 5:2); “roaring lion” (ch. 5:8).

Words or expressions used more often in 1 Peter than any other book:

- a) “Well doing” (ch. 2:15; 3:17; 4:19); “submit” (ch. 2:13; 5:5); “begotten us again” (ch. 1:3); “evildoer” (ch. 2:12, 14; 3:16; 4:15); “guile” (ch. 2:1, 22; 3:10)

### Suggested Structure

There are several ways any book of the scriptures can be subdivided and the following is one of the ways for this epistle.

- a) Salvation (ch. 1:3-2:10), emphasizing the Christian’s belief
- b) Submission (ch. 2:10-3:12), emphasizing the Christian’s behavior
- c) Suffering (ch. 3:13-5:11), emphasizing the Christians buffetings

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Relationships:

- a) What we are in relation to God - family (ch. 1:3-2:11)
- b) What we are in relationship to the world - strangers (ch. 2:12-4:19)
- c) What we are in our relationships to the saints - a flock (ch. 5:1-11)

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**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.  
John 16:13**

Rowan Jennings, Abbotsford, British Columbia